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LETTER DATED 30 DECEMBER 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 29 December 1997 addressed to you by Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, giving details of the fresh Turkish incursion into Iraq's territory on 25 December 1997 and urging the United Nations to meet its responsibilities as laid down in the Charter and to halt the intimidation and aggression to which Iraq is being subjected.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 29 December 1997 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General

Further to our letter of 8 December 1997 (S/1997/968), I have the honour to draw your attention to the fact that on 25 December 1997, the Turkish armed forces, supported by the air force, launched a fresh invasion into the territory of the Republic of Iraq, towards the regions of Birbanah, Sanat and Afkuzi to the north-east of the city of Zakho.

The Government of the Republic of Iraq strongly condemns the repeated aggressions and violations by the Turkish armed forces, and categorically rejects the arguments put forward by Turkey to justify the continuing incursions into its territory.

The pretext invoked, namely, the pursuit of rebel elements opposed to the Turkish Government in order to put an end to their activities, does not authorize the Turkish armed forces to invade Iraqi territory or violate its integrity. Turkey uses spurious arguments to justify its acts of aggression when, in fact, it is the policy pursued by the Turkish Government, in cooperating with the United States and United Kingdom Governments to impose an unlawful no-flight zone, that is to blame for the tensions in northern Iraq.

The repeated acts of aggression undertaken by the Turkish Government are a dangerous violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, destroy the principle of good-neighbourliness and contravene the 1926 Iraq-Turkey boundary agreement.

Iraq, while demanding that the Turkish Government immediately withdraw its invasion forces from Iraqi territory and desist from any repetition of these continual aggressive practices, holds the Turkish Government entirely and internationally responsible for these acts of aggression inside Iraqi territory and for their consequences, regardless of the arguments used to justify them. The Government of the Republic of Iraq reserves its right under international law to determine an appropriate response to this iniquitous military aggression and to seek compensation for the damage caused by these repeated Turkish breaches and violations of Iraq's territory and airspace and for the human suffering inflicted on Iraqi citizens by these acts.

The Government of Iraq renews its call to the Government of Turkey to renounce its dangerous policy, which clearly contributes to perpetuating the abnormal situation in northern Iraq, in cooperation with the United States and United Kingdom Governments, as part of a dangerous scheme to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs.

While reiterating, through you, my country's call to the Turkish Government to respect Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity, I express the hope that the United Nations will meet its responsibilities as laid down in the Charter and halt the intimidation and aggression to which Iraq is constantly being subjected.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq